NUMB. CVI.

The SPECTATOR.

—— Hinc tibi Copia
Manabit ad plenum, benigno
Ruris honorum opulenta cornu. Hor.

Monday, July 2. 1711.

HAving often received an Invitation from my Friend Sir ROGER DE COVERLY to paſs away a Month with him in the Country, I laſt Week accompanied him thither, and am ſettled with him for ſome Time at his Country-houſe, where I intend to form ſeveral of my enſuing Speculations. Sir ROGER, who is very well acquainted with my Humour, lets me riſe and go to bed when I pleaſe, dine at his own Table or in my Chamber as I think fit, ſit ſtill and ſay nothing without bidding me be merry. When the Gentlemen of the Country come to ſee him, he ſhews me at a Diſtance: As I have been walking in his Fields I have obſerved them ſtealing a Sight of me over an Hedge, and have heard the Knight adviſing them not to let me ſee them, for that I hated to be ſtared at.

I am the more at Eaſe in Sir ROGER's Family, becauſe it conſiſts of ſober and ſtaid Perſons; for as the Knight is the beſt Maſter in the World, he ſeldom changes his Servants; and as he is beloved by all about him, his Servants never care for leaving him: By this Means his Domeſticks are all in Years, and grown old with their Maſter. You would take his Valet de Chambre for his Brother, his Butler is grey-headed, his Groom is one of the graveſt Men that I have ever ſeen, and his Coachman has the Looks of a Privy-Counſellor. You ſee the Goodneſs of the Maſter even in the old Houſe-dog, and in a grey Pad that is kept in the Stable with great Care and Tenderneſs out of regard to his paſt Services, tho' he has been uſeleſs for ſeveral Years.

I could not but obſerve with a great deal of Pleaſure the Joy that appeared in the Countenances of theſe ancient Domeſticks upon my Friend's Arrival at his Country-Seat. Some of them could not refrain from Tears at the Sight of their old Maſter; every one of them preſs'd forward to do ſomething for him, and ſeemed diſcouraged if they were not employed. At the ſame Time the good old Knight, with a Mixture of the Father and the Maſter of the Family, tempered the Enquiries after his own Affairs with ſeveral kind Queſtions relating to themſelves. This Humanity and good Nature engages every Body to him, ſo that when he is pleaſant upon any of them, all his Family are in good Humour, and none ſo much as the Perſon whom he diverts himſelf with: On the Contrary, if he coughs or betrays any Infirmity of old Age, it is eaſy for a Stander-by to obſerve a ſecret Concern in the Looks of all his Servants.

My worthy Friend has put me under the particular Care of his Butler, who is a very prudent Man, and, as well as the reſt of his Fellow-Servants, wonderfully deſirous of pleaſing me, becauſe they have often heard their Maſter talk of me as of his particular Friend.

My chief Companion when Sir ROGER is diverting himſelf in the Woods or the Fields, is a very venerable Man, who is ever with Sir ROGER, and has lived at his Houſe in the Nature of a Chaplain above thirty Years. This Gentleman is a Perſon of good Senſe and ſome Learning, of a very regular Life and obliging Converſation: He heartily loves Sir ROGER, and knows that he is very much in the old Knight's Eſteem; ſo that he lives in the Family rather as a Relation than a Dependant.

I have obſerved in ſeveral of my Papers, that my Friend Sir ROGER, amidſt all his good Qualities, is ſomething of an Humouriſt; and that his Virtues, as well as Imperfections, are as it were tinged by a certain Extravagance, which makes them particularly his, and diſtinguiſhes them from thoſe of other Men. This Caſt of Mind, as it is generally

very

very innocent in itſelf, ſo it renders his Converſation highly agreeable, and more delightful than the ſame Degree of Senſe and Virtue would appear in their common and ordinary Colours. As I was walking with him laſt Night, he ask'd me, How I liked the good Man whom I have juſt now mentioned? and without ſtaying for my Anſwer, told me, That he was afraid of being inſulted with *Latin* and *Greek* at his own Table; for which Reaſon, he deſired a particular Friend of his at the Univerſity to find him out a Clergyman rather of plain Senſe than much Learning, of a good Aſpect, a clear Voice, a ſociable Temper, and, if poſſible, a Man that underſtood a little of Back-Gammon. My Friend, ſays Sir ROGER, found me out this Gentleman, who, beſides the Endowments I required of him, is, they tell me, a good Scholar though he does not ſhew it. I have given him the Parſonage of the Pariſh; and becauſe I know his Value, have ſettled upon him a good Annuity during his Life. If he out-lives me, he ſhall find that he was higher in my Eſteem than perhaps he thinks he is. He has now been with me thirty Years; and though he does not know I have taken Notice of it, has never in all that Time asked any thing of me for himſelf, tho' he is every Day ſoliciting me for ſomething in Behalf of one or other of my Tenants his Pariſhioners. There has not been a Law-Suit in the Pariſh ſince he has lived among them: If any Diſpute ariſes, they apply themſelves to him for the Deciſion; if they do not acquieſce in his Judgment, which I think never happened above once or twice at moſt, they appeal to me. At his firſt ſettling with me, I made him a Preſent of all the good Sermons that have been printed in *Engliſh*, and only begged of him that every *Sunday* he would pronounce one of them in the Pulpit. Accordingly, he has digeſted them into ſuch a Series, that they follow one another naturally, and make a continued Syſtem of practical Divinity.

As Sir ROGER was going on in his Story, the Gentleman we were talking of came up to us; and upon the Knight's aſking him who preached to Morrow (for it was *Saturday* Night) told us, the Biſhop of St. *Aſaph* in the Morning, and Doctor *South* in the Afternoon. He then ſhewed us his Liſt of Preachers for the whole Year, where I ſaw with a great deal of Pleaſure Archbiſhop *Tillotſon*, Biſhop *Saunderſon*, Doctor *Barrow*, Doctor *Calamy*, with ſeveral living Authors who have publiſhed Diſcourſes of practical Divinity. I no ſooner ſaw this venerable Man in the Pulpit, but I very much approved of my Friend's inſiſting upon the Qualifications of a good Aſpect and a clear Voice; for I was ſo charmed with the Gracefulneſs of his Figure and Delivery, as well as with the Diſcourſes he pronounced, that I think I never paſſed any Time more to my Satisfaction. A Sermon repeated after this Manner, is like the Compoſition of a Poet in the Mouth of a graceful Actor.

I could heartily wiſh that more of our Country-Clergy would follow this Example; and inſtead of waſting their Spirits in laborious Compoſitions of their own, would endeavour, after a handſome Elocution and all thoſe other Talents that are proper to enforce what has been penn'd by greater Maſters. This would not only be more eaſy to themſelves, but more edifying to the People.

In laſt Saturday's SPECTATOR, *Column* 1, *Line* 35. *for* laſt Night, *read* laſt Week.

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